Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Cocos Malays in Tawau, Sabah

Abstract
This paper is part of ongoing research to explore the unique intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and practices of the Cocos Malays in Sabah. As an enclaved community that came from Cocos (Keeling) Islands to settle down in North Borneo, the Cocos Malays originated from various ethnicities, mostly of Malay origin with Islamic practices. In 1893, they became an independent community after joining Malaysia. Their ICH and practices are a mixture of English, Scottish, Malay and Japanese. The paper attempts to discuss the Cocos Malays’ ICH and practices after the emigration until now. Their present ICH and practices were not only influenced by the Cocos (Keeling) Islands but also by the assimilation with the local culture and lifestyle. This study was done through archival research and field work data collection (in-depth interview and non-participatory observation) with the local residents. The paper explores that most of the Cocos Malays’ ICH and practices were still maintained from their ancestry, but certain practices have changed to suit their current lifestyle, environment and spiritual teachings. © 2017 American Scientific Publishers. All rights reserved.

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Cocos Malay, intangible cultural heritage (ICH), social practices, Tawau, Sabah